

# ***PRESS RELEASE***

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Missouri Senate

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## **Weekly Capitol Report**

JEFFERSON CITY – This week in the Missouri Senate we passed a proposed ballot issue, SJR29. This proposed amendment to the Missouri Constitution merely states “that to be valid and recognized in this state, a marriage shall exist only between a man and a woman”. I was also very proud to be a cosponsor of this resolution, as I believe many of my constituents support it.

Several years ago, Missouri lawmakers passed a statute defining marriage as a union between a man and a woman – regardless of where the marriage is performed. Senator Steelman’s measure would allow voters to place similar language in Missouri’s constitution.

First round approval came on the same day that President Bush said he supported a constitutional amendment banning same-sex marriage to “prevent the meaning of marriage from being changed forever.” He urged Congress to “promptly pass and send to the states for ratification” an amendment that would specifically define marriage as the union of a man and a woman.

A number of states have passed laws forbidding gays from marrying or barring the recognition of a same-sex marriage performed in another state. The federal government's 1996 Defense of Marriage Act affirms that states are not required to recognize a same-sex marriage performed in another state.

With the Massachusetts Supreme Court striking a ban on same-sex marriages as unconstitutional, and city officials in San Francisco issuing thousands of gay marriage licenses despite a California law defining marriage as a heterosexual institution, this issue has become important for the Missouri legislature.

We also passed SB 870, a bill tackling the issue of adult material used for billboard advertising. I voted for legislation this week that would prohibit placing offensive billboards within one mile of a state highway.

In recent years, the protections surrounding our kid's childhoods have been steadily eroded. Its tough to be a kid anymore and increasingly our children are being given information that they are simply not mature enough to handle. One of the more glaring examples of this assault on innocence is the spread of huge billboards along Missouri's major highways advertising "adult cabarets" and other sexually oriented businesses.

This bill was given first round approval by the State Senate and will soon be sent to the House of Representatives for their consideration.

I would like to take a minute to salute one of our neighbors, Jim Wehr of Mountain Grove. In case you have not heard, Jim rose above the call to community duty this week by donating \$100,000 to the Mountain Grove school district so that their athletics programs could continue. Due to budget cuts and the failure of a 75-cent tax levy earlier this month, school officials had to cut the program in order to continue operating.

In Jefferson City, we are working with what seems to be a shrinking pie of revenue that has to be divided up amongst many departments and programs. By our constitution education is the first concern of state government after public debt service and is treated as such daily in Jefferson City. Knowing that there are good Samaritans like Jim Wehr among us makes me think that a great solution to our funding problem would be to create public-private funding partnerships.

Perhaps this will inspire more good Samaritans to step forward and support our local schools.

What do you think? If you haven't received our constituent survey in your local newspaper, visit my Senate website at [www.senate.state.mo.us/04info/members/mem20.htm](http://www.senate.state.mo.us/04info/members/mem20.htm) where it is available for download. Your thoughts and opinions help me form my decisions in the legislature. I look forward to hearing from you. I will be releasing the results of the survey around mid March.

Of course, you can always call our office toll free at 1.866.242.0810 or email to [dan\\_clemens@senate.state.mo.us](mailto:dan_clemens@senate.state.mo.us).

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